

Plastic Free July Challenge

What is the Plastic Free July Challenge?

[Plastic Free July](#) is a global movement that aims at being part of the solution around plastic pollution. The movement challenges people to reduce plastic waste by cutting out on their use of single-use plastics throughout the whole of July (and possibly inspire them to do so beyond that). When taking the challenge you have the agency to decide how much of your plastic use you want to cut down on, ranging from avoiding all single-use plastic packaging, targeting only the “big four” takeaway plastic items (bags, bottles, straws and cups) or going completely plastic-free. You can also choose how long you want to take part - do you just want to give it a go for a day, a week, all of July or from now on? Importantly, no matter what plastic items you decide to cut out of your daily habits and whether you do it for a week or a month, every little bit makes a difference. Once you've taken the challenge you will receive weekly emails to support you with advice from other participants, their stories and general content to keep you motivated.

Have we convinced you? **Take the challenge [here](#).** Not convinced, too busy or unsure where to start? Don't worry! We've put together a list of small things you can do and have added the amount of time it takes to do so. If you want to read more about the impact of plastic pollution on our ocean have a read of our [Plastic Pollution Guide](#).

6 Super Simple Things you can do this Summer to Cut Down on Your Plastic Use (Even if You are Busy)

Whether or not you decide to take the Plastic Free July Challenge, we encourage you to give at least one of these tips below a try. Every small bit can make a big difference in the long run. As we understand that we all have a lot going on, especially at the moment, each tip includes an indication of the time it will take for you to put these tips into practice. You'd be surprised about how much you can achieve by investing 3 minutes of your time to support tackling plastic pollution...

TIP 1: LAUNDRY DETERGENT

A super easy way to contribute to tackling plastic pollution that comes from the packaging used in laundry detergents is [Smol](#). They allow you to get your laundry detergent delivered through your letterbox using zero plastic. As if that isn't already cool enough, not only are their capsules eco-friendly and cruelty-free but they are also up to 50% cheaper compared to your normal brand price.

Time Investment - 3 minutes: Filling out a few questions about your washing habits so that Smol can anticipate how often they send you the capsules will take you around **3 minutes**. Now all that's left to do is sign-up, you'll even get your first month for free. Also, spending these 3 minutes will save you a lot of time in the long run as you won't have to go to the shop to buy laundry detergent.

TIP 2: PLASTIC BAGS

Bring your own bag: Heard this one before? Still struggling to remember to take a reusable bag every time you go to a shop? We understand that so we have two simple ways for you to make a habit out of it:

1. Put a note on your door to remind yourself to take a bag! We'd recommend multiple notes, these can include:
 - a. Your room door or house door (these will remind you right as you are about to leave the house)
 - b. Somewhere over the shoe rack or where you keep your jackets (these will remind you when you are getting ready to leave the house)
 - c. Fridge door or cupboards (for when you're checking what food you have left when making a shopping list)
2. Carry a reusable bag in each of your bags so you'll always have one available when you are on the go

Time Investment - 1 minute: Writing these notes and sticking them up and putting reusable bags into each of your bags should take you **less than a minute**. Don't own a reusable bag, yet? Either just take one of the plastic bags you already own and re-use it or alternatively many shops now sell reusable bags which you can purchase the next time you go to the store.

TIP 3: ENJOY A SUMMERY DRINK USING NON-PLASTIC STRAWS

Plastic straws can easily be replaced by a range of alternatives (e.g. paper or glass straws) but our favourite alternative is using pasta straws. You can try finding these at your local supermarket in the pasta aisle (they're called Bucatini) OR try Stroodles. You can buy 12 Stroodles for only £3.45 [here](#).

Time Investment - 3 to 4 minutes: We estimate that this action will take around 3 minutes, maximum of 4 minutes depending on how long it takes you during the checkout process.

TIP 4: ENJOY A DRINK AND TACKLE PLASTIC POLLUTION AT THE SAME TIME

Take part in the #PlasticFreePints challenge by bringing your own reusable cup or container when getting takeaway pints from the pub next weekend to avoid single-use plastic cups. The initiative was started by [Ecodisco](#), a consultancy working on creating a more sustainable nightlife and events industry and [Ours To Save](#) a recently launched, interactive platform publishing crowdsourced, global climate news. Here is how it works:

1. Bring your own reusable cup or container when buying your takeaway pint from the pub.
2. Take a pic; tag [@ecodisco_](#) and [@ours.tosave](#) and #plasticfreepints; upload to Instagram.
3. Nominate 5 of your mates to do the same 🍷🍺

Time investment - 5 minutes: We estimate this should take you around 5 minutes (excluding drinking the pint, of course). 2 minutes to find a reusable cup or container somewhere in your house, 2 minutes to take the picture (this step may take longer if you want to photograph your pint in a range of different poses) and 1 minute to upload the picture on Instagram.

TIP 5: PICK UP A PIECE OF PLASTIC

As lockdown measures are being relaxed all around the world, people are rushing to be outdoors by going to parks and beaches. However, this has resulted in a drastic increase in litter and rubbish that is being left behind on [beaches, parks](#) or other [beauty spots](#). If you are out and about (hopefully, happily drinking a pint or cocktail out of a reusable container) pick up plastic wrappers or rubbish lying around and put them in the bin on your way home. [Social norms](#) are one of the most powerful tools to get people to change their behaviour. This means that if people see a park or beach full of rubbish, they will be more likely to leave their rubbish as well, as they will think that this sort of behaviour is fine because other people are doing the same thing. By picking up plastic wrappers or any litter that comes your way you can challenge these social norms and change them without any effort whatsoever...

Time investment - None: If you are leaving the park or beach and encounter a plastic wrapper or any other rubbish along the way, all you really need to do is lean down, pick it up and bin it. As chances are high that you will encounter bins as you leave the premises we don't expect this to take you any additional time on your way home.

TIP 6: SIGN A PETITION

Pushing your government to take action is just as important as changing your own behaviour (and it doesn't even cost anything). Sign these petitions to ask your government to ban non-essential single-use plastics:

- UK: https://act.friendsoftheearth.uk/petition/help-reduce-plastic-oceans?_ga=2.91598106.1644270942.1591708714-819759769.1591708714
- NZ: https://act.greenpeace.org/page/61758/petition/1?_ga=2.155220987.1737172553.1591780510-1097891709.1591780510
- AU: <https://www.marineconservation.org.au/actions/ban-single-use-plastics/>
- US: <https://plasticoceans.org/act-on-plastic/>
- CA: https://act.greenpeace.org/page/60320/action/1?locale=en-US&_ga=2.182205671.1737172553.1591780510-1097891709.1591780510

Time investment - 2 minutes: Signing these petitions is super quick and simple but could make a big difference in tackling plastic pollution...Surely you have 2 minutes to spare?

ARE YOU STILL THINKING "I DON'T HAVE TIME" OR "I'LL DO THIS LATER"?

We've calculated that were you decide to do all these things it will only take you **15 minutes** but it will make a huge difference - Amazing how little time you need to invest to start taking action, right? Try just one of these tips right now!

INTERESTED IN FINDING OUT MORE ABOUT ALL THE DIFFERENT WAYS THERE ARE TO TACKLE PLASTIC POLLUTION?

Check out [SHiFT](#) for all the different solutions there are to ocean plastic across all life domains.